

# INTERMISSION #134

E-zine by Ahrvid Engholm, ahrvid@hotmail.com, for EAPA, N'APA and other fans of folly. Follow ed's newstweets from @SFJournalen (updates slow lately due to Ukraine syndrome: being occupied). More history in this, virus roundup, an other BNF RIP, Eurocon, etc. Sorry that tyoes fly around like mosquitoes in a Swedish summer! Mid July 2022

## Editorially: Eurovision, Eurocon, Being Late, AI

Today's latest news, if you followed my skiffy analysis of the Eurovison Song Contest, is that our local TV company has decided that the 2024 edition of this intellectual Tour de Force, is to be held in early May in our southern city of *Malmö*. They've had the contest twice already and did alright. Runner-up Stockholm had found possible venues had already booked. They launched the insane idea that in less than a year build a *temporary* one for 15 000 people - sounded desperat and not very cost-efficient. No, congrats to Malmö!

I'll have a sad RIP in this, of a true fannish dinosaur. Also stuff from the recent Eurocon (based on my tweets, to simplify, as I'm late) and then the true figures of the Corona epidemic on this northern latitude. Sweden had the *lowest excess deaths* (the best way to measure virus effects!) in Europe, despite being accused of being "careless" by those having their own hypodermics to grind. There'll be nAltional day thing. And of course, a History Corner - which I believe is that department most readers find interesting. So, what's up in the world? What's not up!

The US grabbed Turkey's ear and old Yellow and Blue will shortly have a membership card for club NATO. The other Yellow and Blue will have to wait until Wladolf Putler goes on vacation in a really hot place, way, way down. Oh, our new astronaut Markus is already scheduled for flight, going up with a SpaceX Dragon next year. And girl Greta of all our dreams (or nightmares) has been in Kyiv. She's been appointed to a delegation to study Ukrainian reconstruction after the war. She talked about that Mr P

didn't give a dam about that big dam, so he blew it up. She explained how bad it was for all the animals. President Zelensky agreed. Some people also didn't fare well.

Will Putler blow up the nearby nuclear stations too? Who knows what that man will do!

Finally: in late June a newly acquired laptop refused to boot. There was a warranty so I asked the seller for service. That would take at least three weeks - one fears it may be longer since everything shuts down here in July - and temporary replacement was hard to find in short time. That delay, cons and being rather occupied with lotsa things has delayed this. I hope the August issue wont be too late...

## Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize

As our greatest advocate of space opera May 21st turned 90 years - I'm talking about Bertil Falk of course - writer, reporter, editor, scholar, translator - I took the initiative to launch a *space opera prize*, named in his honour, as I briefed you in last issue. It's worth a little recap. (And to Swedish readers: there's one spot open in *the jury*. Send me a rocketmail if you're interested.)

It's aimed at Swedish writers, but here's an idea for others: run your amazing, astounding, astonishing space opera story through a *translation service*, those are getting very good these days



Volodymyr and Greta. Serious talks.



Markus Wandt. Sweden's 3rd astronaut, goes orbital next year

with AI help! It'd be interesting if someone would experiment with it. (It won't be disqualified.) *Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize* offers eternal glory, a diploma and an as yet unknown cash prize. The prize will be crowdfunded. (At least €50 has been collected since last - thanks Ulf and Cecilia! €100 doesn't seem impossible to reach. That's a reason to plug the contest. Account details last.)

Bertil has done just about everything since he had his first story published in the *Stockholms-Tidningen* newspaper in 1946 when he was 12! His "Trip to Space" is available here, also in English translation: <https://file770.com/bertil-falk-from-a-space-hobo-to-finnegans-wake/>

Beside translating the "untranslatable" James Joyce classic *Finnegans Wake*, he's written a heap of books (recently a huge 3 volume history of Swedish sf), worked as publisher, magazine editor (*JVM*, *DAST Magazine*), journalist and more.

But his first love as a little boy was those silly, daydreaming - as school teachers complained loudly! - space stories in our local pulp *Jules Verne Magasinet*, especially the colourful adventures of Captain Future, here known as "Kpt Frank" and very popular (*JVM* reaching 85 000 copies, ie +1% of the population, proportionally as if *Astounding* had sold 15 million copies!). A local Cpt Future club was active up to the 1980's, Bertil published Cpt F and a cassette zine came with a Cpt Future mini musical. In 1975 Bertil visited Leigh Brackett (herself a master of space opera!) and Edmond Hamilton, the main culprit behind Captain Future. Bertil often mentioned and wrote about this "Wizard of Science" and other old masters of space, like Vladimir Semitjov and Sture Lönnerstrand.



Ed Hamilton, author of *Cpt Future*, and Bertil Falk (in the 1970s)

An extra reason for a space fiction prize is that so *much is happening* in space right now! NASA returns to the Moon. SpaceX builds the biggest rocket in history (also reusable) ultimately aiming for Mars. Europe builds a new telescope with an eye big as a hockey rink and the Webb space telescope meanwhile takes the sharpest pictures ever. China builds a space station, and also aims for the Moon (with India, Japan and others to follow). We have rovers on Mars, take pictures of Black Holes, crash into comets, see Captain Kirk take a real space jump, have AIs to find ET phoning home. Even little Sweden now builds a launch pad for satellites, with first shot expected within a year, and our guy Markus will soon go up there.

To enter Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize contest, send your space opera story (defined as a science fiction story set in space) nomination to [spaceoperaprize@rocketship.com](mailto:spaceoperaprize@rocketship.com) no later than September 21. Any length admissible. It must have been published in 2022, but yet unpublished work may also be nominated - in that case you must attach it. A jury has begun forming, but there's a spot open if you're interested. The jury may also on its own accord look for stories that may be awarded.

You apply for the jury job to Your's Truly. It'd be nice if you're interested space and have been into writing space fiction yourself. Anyway all space fans are urged to make a small donation to (though I believe it'll be more complicated or foreigners) my Handelsbanken account 6153-330 334 578 and tell [ahrvid@hotmail.com](mailto:ahrvid@hotmail.com) that. Donors will be officially thanked, but may be anonymous if you wish.

And Bertil, congratulations once again! Your space dreams from boyhood are turning real.

### **RIP: Hans Sidén - Gothenburg Fandom Founder, Mingled with the Stars**

Maths Claesson hardly had time to get below 37C when we had more sad news: one of the founders of our fandom, journalist Hans Siden (b 1935) went to the eternal Gafia June 24, aged 87. Our



A young Hans Sidén with a prop from "This Island Earth" (1955).

historical trufandom slowly dies as the fen who created it kick the rocket-bucket one by one.

An 18-year old Hans Sidén was one of the founders of our fifth oldest sf club, the only still active, Gothenburg's Club Cosmos launched in 1954 (#1 was Atom-Noak 1945, #2 Strate Organisation 1949, #3 was Futura 1950, #4 was club Meteor 1952) and co-editor - with Lars-Erik Helin and Gabriel Setterborg - of Sweden's #2 fanzine *Cosmos News* (1954, #1 was *Vår Rymd* 1952). He wrote a lot about sf and fandom in the papers, a few books, and generally covered modern culture, especially rock music, movies, comics and popular literature.

Mr Sidén was there as it happened, as stated in his photo book *The Boy With the Paisley Shirt* (2021, in English with a vinyl single, available on Amazon):

*Beatles, Stones, Who, Kinks, Hendrix, Dusty and Tages - the music explosion of the 60's in Gothenburg seen through the lens of Hans Sidén's camera. He sat so close to the band that he could've*

*leaned forward and touched Lennon's shoes when The Beatles played Cirkus in October 1963. He bantered with Rolling Stones in a hotel room, went to the discoteque with The Who and had dinner with The Troggs. He hitched a ride with Tages to Stockholm and with The Hep Stars to Borås, served Cat Stevens home made pizza, lent stacks of Tamla Motown and Stax singles to English DJ Clem Dalton and hung around every soundcheck when the stars came to town. Journalist, illustrator and author Hans Sidén had front row tickets to the music scene in Gothenburg, Sweden all through the sixties and happened to bring his cameras.*

That beats touching Erik Andersson's shoes when he filked or drinking tea as Steve Sem-Sandberg howled and owled!

I met Sidén a few times. A nice fellow how knew a lot about popular culture.

Though he wasn't too fanactive in older days, earlier he was often one of rather few to report from out conventions - as examples from previous issues show. Here's another one, from Göteborgs Handels och Sjöfartstidning Sep 23 1967 (signature "Fotobomber" fits the camera carrying Sidén), "Science Fiction Meet":

*Around 40 sf aficionados from the whole Nordic area gathers this spring in Gothenburg for a convention. It'll be the 12th convention of its kind and it's arranged by the supporters of the field in Gothenburg, who call the event Götcon 1, as it's the first time Gothenburg has this honour. Among the topics of the convention we note sf (science fiction) subjects in today's culture, sf Vs fantasy (scientifically impossible fiction), information on foreign sf and fandom (sf fans). Films are shown and records are played, among them Orson Welles' War of the Worlds. An award, Alvar, is also handed out. The adventures take place in the Björngårds Villa and visits of several famous friends of sf are expected.*

Gabriel Setterborg here covers how Club Cosmos was founded [https://clubcosmos-net.translate.google.com/history1.php?\\_x\\_tr\\_sl=no&\\_x\\_tr\\_tl=sv&\\_x\\_tr\\_hl=sv&\\_x\\_tr\\_pto=wapp](https://clubcosmos-net.translate.google.com/history1.php?_x_tr_sl=no&_x_tr_tl=sv&_x_tr_hl=sv&_x_tr_pto=wapp) noting eg how young Hans Sidén at that time already "subscribed to several American sf magazines". Subbing to foreign mags ("several"! ) is advanced for a boy hardly out of high school. For one thing we had currency export restrictions. And English was first foreign school languages since only 1944.

Hans Sidén was a legend!

## Eurocon, 7-9 June, Uppsala

As this issue was delayed by some computer glitches and a heap of other things, to save time I'll resort to simply give you the pictures of the tweets I posted during the con, with original captions, and to this add some running comments. Besides, it's no point in wasting too much on a conrep nowadays, since this artform has degenerated. A good conrep used to be a witty thing, a fannish reporter walking around making humorous observations, funny associations and even puns. Conreps

### Science fiction-träff

Ett 40-tal science fiction-älskare från hela Norden samlas under påsken till kongress i Göteborg. Det blir den tolfte kongressen i sitt slag och den anordnas av branschens tillskyndare i Göteborg som kallar mötet Götcon 1 eftersom det är första gången Göteborg får den äran. Bland kongressens ämnen märks SF (science fiction)-inslag i dagens kultur, SF kontra Fantasy (ej vetenskapligt hållbar fiction), Orientering om utländsk sf och fandom (sf-fans). Filmer visas och skivor spelas, bla Orson Welles Världarnas krig. Ett pris, "Alvar", utdelas också. Äventyrligheterna utspelas i Björngårdsvillan och man väntar besök av flera bemärkta sf-vänner. (Fotobomber)



today are mostly dry diaries, or even worse: I've seen examples attempting to imitate modernist, pretentious literature: obscure, self-centred and tedious. Bo-o-oring! No, I'll do it this way. BTW, you'll find other reports online if you google "Konflikt Uppsala", as they named the convention fitting Mr Vladof Putler's recent destructive hobby (to kill, rape, steal and maim).

You'll get my @SFJournalen tweets in approximately chronological order. In my first tweet we see fen Seppo Laine, Tony Elgenstierna (both active since 4+

decades), lone Ukrainian attendee Sergei Paltsun (among other things author of 100+ short stories, he told me) and Latvian publisher Imants. Seppo manned the well-stocked second hand book table, where I eventually obtained a well-filled bag of reading material at €1 apiece.

Next one shows infamous fan fraud couple Mr John-Henri Humbug and Mr Belly, still owning Swefandom 1000s of € and numerous gafiations from fen-fleeing-tired-of-their-shit. (Mr Humbug looked rather bleak and weak.) But here they talked about a new book dealing with Sam J Lundwall and his publishing house Delta, written by Jörgen Jörälv (to the right). Mr Lundwall now 80+ feels he has to speed up and get everything out of his head before Roscoe comes to collect him. We learned he has written a 3000 page (!) manuscript and recorded a bunch of new songs - neither of which will be published! Sam J strangely seems to want to rub out stuff instead of add to his life. He has also burnt his entire



Panel on Sam J Lundwall & Delta publishing house



Entrance to Eurocon (Uppsala Uni)



Opening staff & GoHs



Panel on flying cars etc

archive. Jörgen's book is partly interesting fanarcheology, in which he trough careful collection of sources Sam hasn't thrown on the fire, reconstructed Delta's and its editor's career in fair detail (including details even your humble sf historian didn't know). Next tweet: Uppsala University main building that hosted it is beautiful, as you can see in my. Next tweet: The main hall for opening and track 1 program is like Parthenon in Rome! But I heard the rent was astronomical (ca €50K) and there was only a cafe, no proper bar (bheer €7-8! - too expensive for me, alas). I attended panel on flying cars and other sf vehicle. Danish futurologist Klaus Mogensen Many were too loosely handled, allowing panelists to mumble for minutes. I suggest they should have an egg timer interrupting everyone after 1 minute!) Next tweet: GoHs were presented: Johan Egerkrans (Swe), Merja Polvinen (Fin), Francesco Verso (Ita), Martha Wells (US). Far right interior of Uppsala's SF/Fantasy bookstore, small but well stocked. Middle: Finnfandom made an English presentation publication, but I simply had to point out that its fandom timeline is *wrong!* The first sf con in Finland was King-Con in 1982 (I was among those behind,

Up to 2/3 of the program were panels.



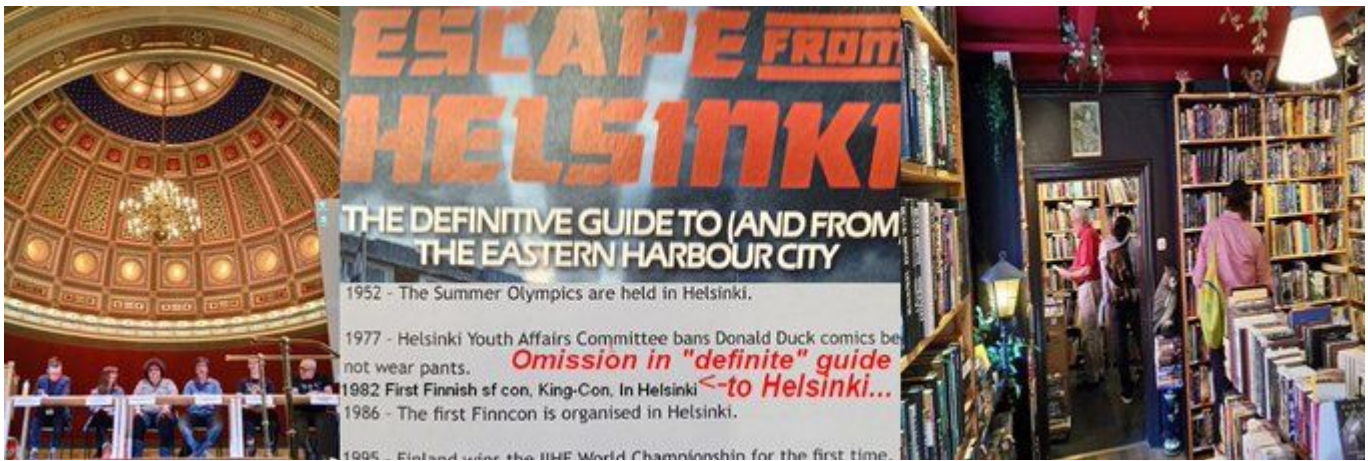
Swefan history through filk. KJ Noren sings about broken mimeo



Main reception hall



Fun coffee klatsch With Ian Watson



while main culprits were Tom Ölander and Sam J Lundwall). Wells' GoH speech - not shown in tweet - was rather interesting, defining skiffy as "what makes metaphors real". KJ Noren - next tweet - made a re-run of his filksong history (one of *far to few fandom-connected* program items!). Entrance hall had perhaps 20 tables for publishers and fan groups. (I put up hastily written info for *Intermission* and writers' list SKRIVA and to my amazement got at least half a dozen to sign up to each!) Ian Watson had fun coffee-klatshes. Next:

Here the program book and catches from the book tables: A Swedish Captain Future novel, translated by *Bertil Falk* BTW, and the very same English original. Some space opera went into my big book bag (I have to prepare for *Bertil Falk's Space Opera Prize!*) and else generally older skiffy. Books were better before word processors came. They have made authors shitting out words like they had loose stomach... Another tweet: Nordic trends panel correctly assessed fantasy was most popular here. A lot of young authors have popped up the last 10-15 years (my SKRIVA list has contributed, several members later coming in book form!).



Myself, well, find most fantasy superficial, naive and uninspiring! How some some can stand swords and magic is beyond me. Eurocon had ca 160 program items and about 600 fen turned up, from the Nordic countries, UK, Poland, Romania, Netherlands, Italy, Spain, France, Switzerland, Germany, the US, Belgium and probably countries forgot. An exoplanets panel is

today almost old news. New planets are found daily. What astronomers now try is to analyse their atmosphere (from the sun's light passing planet edges) for oxygen and other chemicals that indicate life. Next







**Eurocon closes. Flag handed over from Uppsala to Rotterdam for '24.**

**Anna Olsson Rouseff wins 2023 Alvar!**

(with Mr Belly) mass produced fanfund "votes", When his phone was insufficient (no mobiles in 1987!) he simply forged signatures or just jotted down a list: "Votes for Belly, collected by JHH" (top in ill). Documentation is 100%. We sees brown-licking from two in the ESFS board, who further refuse to released nominations to cover their weak support. Corrupt!  
The last pic isn't from Twitter. On



**He defrauded the SEFF fund of \$1000s**

Wöster på Bellis, insamlade av  
JHH enligt de finansiella  
**He invented dozens of ballots ignoring signature requirement!**  
1. Anna Rouseff  
2. Anders F. Forberg  
3. Gabriel Stein  
4. Jonas Björkstén  
5. KG Johansson  
6. John Hall  
7. Lena Johansson  
Hålls 70% -

the train station on my way back to Stockholm, I bumped into Kirill Pleshkov from Russia. I had already of course met and talked with him on the con. Kirill reminded me that we've know each other for 25 years. Despite his negative stance on Putlers terrorising war I found it a bit difficult to really convey my thoughts on this topic. He said most Russians had no understanding for the war, but most would refrain from openly show an opinion. There's only a minority gung-ho war mongers, despite what Kremlin propaganda claims. Apparently Sweden hasn't stopped visas for Russians. I guess we keep a little opening for critics who need to bug out. But Finland was closed. Kirill told me he had to go....through Turkey.

(Where one Mr Erdogan blackmails NATO to stop Sweden joining. It seems we'll get in anyway... Latest news is that Erdogan wants to be let into the EU to approve us - sweet dreams! The EU has already seen Turkish EU negotiations collapse. The deal now seems to be that Sweden "promises" to do it's best to help Turkey into EU - which doesn't mean much. We will also have annual security conferences - OK, fine. I think the US threw in a few F16s too, but not the more advanced F35.)

Generally about Eurocon:

- Too many panels with mumbling slow takers taking themselves too seriously. Almost no fannish program. Too boring sercon! Where's fannishness and fun?

+ Good site. Good weather. At least one good book corner.

-Too expensive bheer. (Inflation times, I know. One solution could be to make con discount deal with a nearby pub. But today's concoms seem to be fat cats with no understanding of high costs for poor fans)

Lots of fen from many corners of the world.

- Skip silly, ethically questionable "Codes of Conduct". Those are rubber rules and often

used to silence freedom of opinion. "CoCs" have several times violated Lex Nycon! The Laws of the Land cover what what you can and cannot do and what rights you have. They are used in a hypocritical way. The Dublin Worldcon a couple of years ago con CoCted it was perfectly fine to attack history's greadedst editor, life-time anti-fascist John W Campbell, calling him a "bloody fascist" from the main stage. CoCs are codified, biased intolerance. Their basic ideas are against the freedom of fandom.

(A month later and due to that thish has been late I went to Finncon 2023 in Tampere. But I'll think I wait with reporting from that. I remember having a backpain through that con, eating painkillers, feeling a little miserable.)



Your industrious editor and Kirill Pleshkov.

## A Science Fiction World and A Plague Dissected

We live in a science fiction world. First we had a world-wide pandemic. Then that asshole Vladolf Putler started a stupid, criminal, meaningless war that even Tom Clancy would have been ashamed imagining. And in recent months we began to see really impressive Artificial Intelligence popping up. It will improve further and will only become more impressive over time...until we all turn into paperclips. (Hopefully not!) On top of that NASA is going back to the Moon, SpaceX continues with reusable, cheaper to operate rockets landing on their tail just like Hergé's Tintin, while we watch rovers roam Mars in almost realtime, get daily sensational pictures from huge new telescopes peering towards the edge of the universe: black holes billions of suns in weight, crashing star systems, thousands of new planets, where we look for life gases in their atmospheres. ..

Even little Sweden (500 years of "independence" from the Kalmar Union in 2023) aims for space. Within a year our Artic Circle space base Esrangle will launch its and mainland Europe's first satellite, and a third Swede (after Christer and Jessica) will enter orbit. One Markus Wandt, civil engineer and former SAAB test pilot, is now scheduled to fly with Space X early 2024. I'm glad I didn't spend all those tumultuous years in the Swedish Space Movement for nothing!

Beside this, flying cars and fusion power are coming. And we may see the fall of self proclaimed Czar, in all but name. In all this the least sensational may be our little 200+ years neutral country sneaks into NATO. It was a far fetched fantasy only a couple of years ago. (Remind me to boycott Turkish Delight, BTW.)

*A science fiction world. As I said.*

Let's have a closer look at the first sf component: the pandemic. (AI ans space will also pop up.)

Many are a bit embarrassed now. They stumbled along the wrong path and now their mistakes are obvious. On Eurocon recently a panelist babbled about how Sweden acted "totally irresponsibly" in the pandemic. The panel topic was something else, but it was as if he simply must get this accusation out of his troubled system.

Afterwards I told him how wrong he was. I showed statistics, news reports from respectable sources, etc. Sweden had among the lightest pandemic "restrictions" and fared among the very best. "Irresponsible"? I've done the math. We'll have a look at the figures, all from official sources!

For 2020, the excess mortality in Sweden was about 4,700 people, while claimed number of



deceased "from corona" officially was ca 9500. Numbers are from the government's own Central Statistics Agency (Statistiska Centralbyrån, SCB). It means that more than half of the deceased that year died WITH the corona virus, not FROM it.

The number of Swedes dying from the virus in 2020-2021 is claimed to be 14,666 (<https://www.socialstyrelsen.se/statistik-och-data/statistik/statistik-om-covid-19/statistik-over-antal-avlidna-i-covid-19/> - from the government's own Social Board, use a translation site) which means that the number of claimed deaths from the coronavirus in 2021 was about 5170. (The above total of 14 666 for 2020-21 minus the ca 9500 of 2020.)

The total deaths in 2021 was 91958 (<https://www.scb.se/hitta-statistik/sverige-i-siffror/manniskorna-i-sverige/doda-i-sverige/> ) which is roughly 6000 fewer than in 2020 (=98124) and means NO excess mortality 2021! There was an under mortality. A number of deceased were, so to speak, "moved" from 2021 to 2020.

Let's calculate the mortality percentage in the five years before the pandemic, with official numbers from the Central Statistics Agency:

Year	Deaths	In tot popul
2015	90907	9851017
2016	90982	9995153
2017	91972	10120242
2018	92185	10230185
2019	88766	10327589

(" / " below of course means "divided by".)

Total deaths 2015-19: 454812 / Deaths in total population 50524186 = 0.00900186694 gives mortality as a fraction (X below). (I use all decimal numbers I get to reduce errors.) Expressed as a percentage it becomes 0.900%.

And here's the mortality in the two pandemic years 2020 and 2021:

Year	Deaths	In tot popul
2020	98124	10379295
2021	91958	10452236

Total deaths 190082 / Deaths in total population 20831531 = 0.00912472539 gives mortality as a fraction (Y below). Expressed as a percentage it becomes 0.9100124.

Excess mortality in 2020-2021 compared to the five-year average before the pandemic, becomes X minus Y = 0.00012285845.

This figure - total excess mortality during two pandemic years - must be multiplied by total population those same years, to obtain the excess mortality number, and that becomes 2559.32960979 (with all decimals the computer gives you are no extra charge) or rounded: 2559.

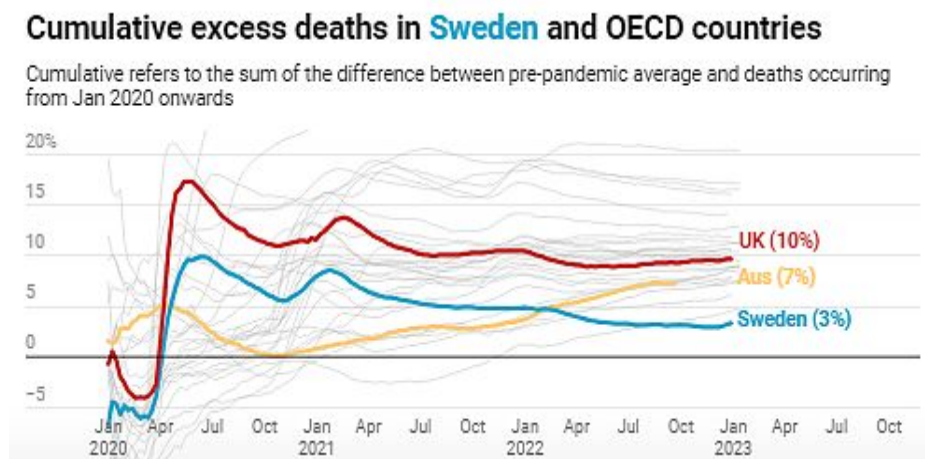
It was claimed that approx 15,000 died "from" the coronavirus in 2020 and 2021, but the the total excess mortality for the two pandemic years was just over 2500:

**ONE SIXTH OF THE CLAIMED NUMBERS!**

There's no "cherry picking". All data is from official government sources. There's no magic complicated maths - just multiply, divide, plus, minus. Deaths from the ordinary flu is 500-1000/year in Sweden. The corona virus deaths was just about twice that - bad enough, but nothing near the hysteria it caused!

As we saw that the pandemic beginning to calm down considerably early 2022, figures became available and conclusions could be drawn: one country had no lockdowns, didn't close schools, didn't order mandatory face masks, didn't force or pressure people to vaccinate, and so on. And many loud-mouthed self-assured opinion makers and politicians should now learn something; **SWEDEN HAD THE LOWEST EXCESS DEATHS** in Europe (or among the very lowest).

<https://www.news.com.au/technology/science/sweden-has-the-lowest-excess-mortality-rate-after->



[the-pandemic-despite-refusing-to-lock-down/news-story/df50001366bb09b6a20421520cbfbf53](https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/data-show-sweden-lower-excess-death-rate-than-most-europe-despite-forgoing-strict-lockdowns)  
<https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/data-show-sweden-lower-excess-death-rate-than-most-europe-despite-forgoing-strict-lockdowns>  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-europe-mortality-idUSKBN2BG1R9>

The reason *claimed* "corona deaths" in Sweden weren't reflected in excess deaths is that they were defined extremely wide. If you died from *any cause*, but had the slightest traces of the virus or perhaps antibodies (ie, you just had it) it was ticked in the box for a "virus death". That of course inflates claimed victims hugely!

Other countries (Norway and others) had stricter death definitions, which of course make comparisons totally meaningless. The best epidemic statistics comes from excess deaths, as they show actual mortality, and opinions about cause of death don't matter. You see the final effect of an epidemic .

Most governments had their pre-planned epidemic strategies organised since many years back, be sure of that!. They were in a think binder in the office of the prime minister or president (the surgeon general having a copy too). It was based on science and worked-out, very careful planning. Those plans looked something like what Sweden did in practice.

Sweden stuck to the plan. *Others panicked!* Some idiot statisticians, eg from Imperial College in London, claimed they had magic "models " that could "predict" that "half a million Brits would die from the little buggger within a year". Or whatever the fearmongers claimed.

Computer models are lousy oracles. They are more like computer games. You construct them from your expectations. You nudge them towards a goal. As you construct and train models you actively *push* them towards what you expected on from the beginning!

Some of the panic measures may even have been fueling the pandemic. If you force a whole family to stay close together for weeks, they will infect each once a little virus sneaks in. Draconian measures also make people angry and lowers the respect for all and any measures! And when you try to stop a virus, you slow down the build up of any herd immunity. Worrying people will certainly also affect their health negatively.

And as our chief epidemiologists Dr Tegnell noted: The scientific support for face masks is surprisingly weak. He noted that eg any protective effect is ruined by virus caught on the outside, which get on your hands when you handle the mask. If you feel "safer" with a mask, you will also take more risks.

Meanwhile, the education of children was hampered for a long time. Small businesses went down the drain. The economy shrank. Huge government credits and handouts were hewn upon us. Part of the inflation we see now is undoubtedly from the government spending during the pandemic. As it wasn't backed by more income and increased production - it meant borrowing, which means creating a debt, which means the government pandemic handouts comes back as inflation (and in the future as increased taxes). Bad economy always means higher mortality. Many countries have seen "average expected life span" dropping- if only marginally, still noticeable. I haven't studied suicide statistics, but I'm sure people's mental well-being took a heavy hit due to house arrests and orders to cover your face wherever you went. Mental depression will also cause deaths without suicides - your body weakens and you take less care of it.

Why lockdowns, forced vaccination sometimes, closed borders, mass testing, vaccination passes, etc if it had no effects, or possibly negative effects? *Mass hysteria*, I'd say.

It wasn't a conspiracy from pharmaceuticals wanting to harvest gold. It wasn't a secret plan from the "deep state" wanting to...well, I don't know, I've never understood the depths of that evil or what the heck it is. It was human psychology on turbo. On one side we had health authorities who finally felt important, feeling their egos and purposes being justified. Professor So-and-so of virology, PhD Smith in statistics and datamodelling "expert" Hacker Jones made beautiful curves and graphs. On the other side we had politicians who knew that in the next election they'd be an easy target if they were perceived to "not have done enough". (BTW, I have no worries about the vaccines. I took shots myself and urged others to do it too. At the same time we must be against *forced* medical pcedures!)

Caution, effects on economy, education, people's mental state etc was all thrown out the window together with the careful scientifically based pre-plans. It doesn't take much for mass hysteria to

break out. I remember how sightings of flying saucers periodically have been almost on a mass hysteria level, especially in the 1950's with all those flying saucers invading movies. We have seen mass hysteria in the environmental "debate" (though there is almost no debate!) from at least the late 1960's and on. The Club of Rome guaranteed in beautiful, scientific curves that most resources would be depleted, pollution would have multiplied by several magnitudes and we'd have widespread famine by the 1990's. The doom never happened, but every voice heard since continue to cry wolf!

In an afterword to his interesting anti-environmentalist novel *State of Fear* (2004), Michael Chrichton notes - and it might surprise you:

*Imagine that there is a new scientific theory that warns of an impending crisis, and points to a way out. /Supported by/ leading scientists, politicians, and celebrities around the world. Research is funded by distinguished philanthropies, and carried out at prestigious universities. The crisis is reported frequently in the media. The science is taught in college and high school classrooms.*

*...Its supporters included Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, and Winston Churchill. It was approved by Supreme Court justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Louis Brandeis, who ruled in its favor. The famous names who supported it included Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone; activist Margaret Sanger; botanist Luther Burbank; Leland Stanford, founder of Stanford University; the novelist HG Wells; the playwright George Bernard Shaw; and hundreds of others. Nobel Prize winners gave support. Research was backed by the Carnegie and Rockefeller Foundations. The Cold Springs Harbor Institute was built to carry out this research, but important work was also done at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, and Johns Hopkins. Legislation to address the crisis was passed in states from New York to California.*

*These efforts had the support of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Medical Association, and the National Research Council. It was said that if Jesus were alive, he would have supported this effort. ...Those who opposed the theory were shouted down and called reactionary, blind to reality, or just plain ignorant... Today, we know that this famous theory that gained so much support was actually pseudoscience. The crisis it claimed was nonexistent. And the actions taken in the name of this theory were morally and criminally wrong. Ultimately, they led to the deaths of millions of people.*

*The theory was eugenics*

### Sweden's National Day

June 6th is Sweden's July 4th. This year it was special, because it's now 500 years since "modern" - in a sense - Sweden was born. We left the Kalmar union. The new king elected cut ties with the Catholic Church and introduced many new administrative institutions. As I've been a bit stressed by a computer mishap and being short of time, I decided to let my friend ChatGPT explain the background. Below is what Mr Electronic Brain came up with!

*To understand the significance of Sweden's National Day, we must first look back to the era of the Kalmar Union. Established in 1397, the Kalmar Union united the kingdoms of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden under a single monarch. However, this union was marked by power struggles and conflicts, leading to the eventual dissolution of the union in the early 16th century. Sweden emerged as an independent nation during this period, forging its own path towards self-determination.*

*Gustav Vasa played a pivotal role in Swedish history, and his reign is considered a turning point in the country's development. Under his leadership, Sweden achieved independence from the Kalmar Union, leading to the establishment of a sovereign state. Gustav Vasa's ascension to the throne on June 6th,*



*June 6th is celebrated on eg Skansen open-air museum. The royal family in the front row. Music. Speeches. The king awards flags to worthy organisations.*

1523, symbolizes the birth of modern Sweden and serves as a cornerstone for the celebration of the National Day.

Another important event that underpins Sweden's National Day is the signing of the 1809 Instrument of Government Constitution. This document, ratified on June 6th, 1809, marked the transition from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. It laid the foundation for democratic principles, granting citizens certain rights and freedoms. The adoption of this constitution solidified Sweden's commitment to a system of governance that respects individual liberties and equality before the law.

Artur Hazelius, the founder of Skansen, an open-air museum in Stockholm, made significant contributions to Swedish culture and heritage preservation. Hazelius introduced the tradition of celebrating the Swedish flag on June 6th in the late 19th century. The Day of the Swedish Flag, observed at Skansen, became an annual event that fostered national pride and unity. Today, the raising of the Swedish flag on National Day continues to symbolize the importance of national identity and cohesion.

While some may propose using Midsummer Day as an alternative date for Sweden's National Day, it is important to consider the historical and cultural significance of June 6th. Midsummer Day, celebrated on the summer solstice, holds its own importance in Swedish traditions. It is a cherished holiday that signifies the arrival of summer and is deeply rooted in folklore and customs. However, shifting the National Day to Midsummer would risk diluting the historical context and unique identity associated with June 6th. Moreover, Midsummer celebrations already have a distinct cultural significance and do not necessarily require the additional layer of representing the nation.

Sweden's National Day, celebrated on June 6th, is an occasion to commemorate the nation's history, independence, and unity. The date's connections to the dissolution of the Kalmar Union, the reign of King Gustav Vasa, the signing of the 1809 Instrument of Government Constitution, and Artur Hazelius' efforts to preserve Swedish heritage all contribute to its significance. While Midsummer Day holds its own place in Swedish culture, it is important to preserve the distinctiveness of June 6th as the National Day, honoring the historical milestones that have shaped Sweden into the nation it is today.

Here's AE again instead of AI: While the above is all correct, the text is repetitive, lacks a little "life", is a bit stale and many details are left out. For instance, usurper Gustav Vasa began his deeds after the Danish king committed the infamous Stockholm Bloodbath when 100 oppositional noblemen (including Gustav's father) were executed. Gustav went to the province of Dalecarlia to get support for his cause. They hesitated, so he went on his way on skis (it was winter). But then the Dalecarlians made up their mind to support Gustav Vasa and sent off skiing couriers, who caught up with him after 90 km. This is the inspiration for the today famous Vasa Race, the world's biggest ski race getting 10 000's of skiers in early March every year.

Another point missed is that the Swedes don't celebrate June 6th as flamboyantly as eg the Norwegians, with their May 17th national day. It may be because Midsummer splits the focus, but more important is perhaps that our pivotal events are so far back that the enthusiasm becomes a bit bland. June 6th wasn't even official national day (by act of parliament) until 1983.

Anyway, I sometimes think that the dissolution of the Kalmar Union is nothing to celebrate! It was originally formed to counter the might of the Hanseatic trading league. If the Nordic countries had stuck together their clout would have been bigger, and perhaps we'd have a chair at the G7 table (or a G8...9). Historians have also in recent decades re-evaluated king Gustav Vasa - he was quite rough around the edges in his reign.



king Gustav Vasa in the Nordic Museum.

# History Corner

There are lots in store for this's Hysteria Corner! We start with Uncle Hugo Gernsback (probably a "bloody fascist" if we'd believe a certain Worldcon stage invader...) and I found a stash of stuff about Yours Truly - promoting space, giving writing advice, finding the origin of "fan" etc. So let's not procrastinate...

AI is now the second hottest show in town (#1 is still Russia's super-stupid war!) and Mr Gernsback speculated on if computers could think in his 1956 tech newsletter *Forecast*. He correctly concluded that they must be taught (now we call it machine learning), but they still wouldn't be as creative as Newton, Edison, Tesla, Verne or Wells in a thousand years, he says. His solution was to keep a *real* human brain alive artificially in a nutrition solution with connected blood vessels. But the brain must be alive when connected so "...steps must be taken to obtain the brain while it is still normal and healthy...a living brain that has been willed by its owner to science prior to his demise." Hugo must have read Ed Hamilton's Captain Future stories, where we have Simon Wright, a "brain in a box".

## THE ELECTRONICIZED BRAIN

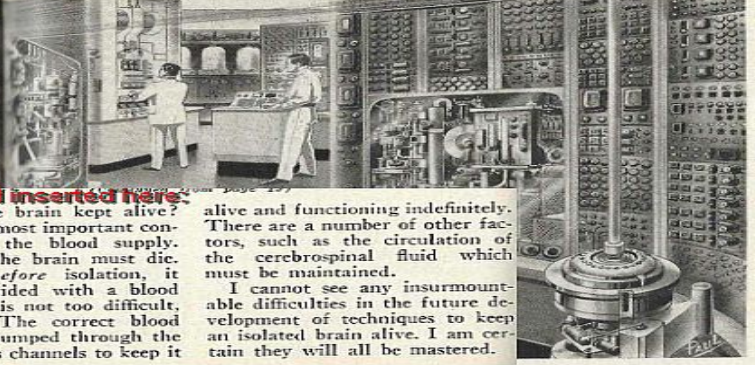
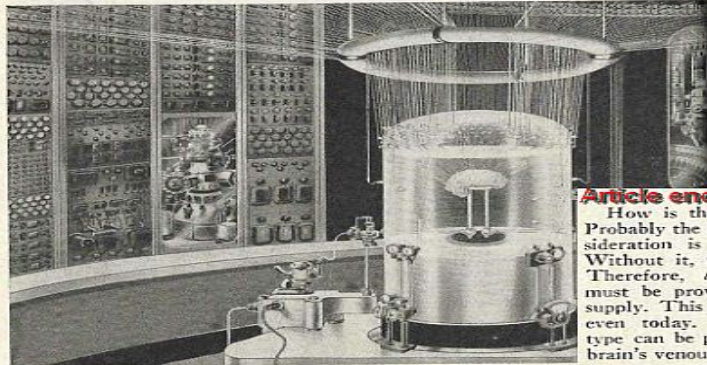
I HAVE always had little patience with those who claim that so-called electronic brains will eventually do away with constructive thinking or reasoning. So many people—even academicians—fall into the trap of

arguing about whether an electronic brain can think—or reason. Before one can argue successfully on such a subject, one must know *what thinking or reasoning is*. No one has ever yet answered this question. We sim-

ply do not know. It is the old argument about an equally confused subject: Do animals think? Can they reason?

Many scientists answer in the affirmative, others in the negative. So with electronic machines

that solve complex problems. Nevertheless humans, the "lower" animals and electronic brains have many limitations; all work differently under varying conditions. *Yet all must be taught in some manner. Isolate a dozen*



Article end inserted here.

How is the brain kept alive? Probably the most important consideration is the blood supply. Without it, the brain must die. Therefore, before isolation, it must be provided with a blood supply. This is not too difficult, even today. The correct blood type can be pumped through the brain's venous channels to keep it

alive and functioning indefinitely. There are a number of other factors, such as the circulation of the cerebrospinal fluid which must be maintained.

I cannot see any insurmountable difficulties in the future development of techniques to keep an isolated brain alive. I am certain they will all be mastered.



Present-day "electronic brains" cannot think. The electronicized future intellectual brain is grown in a special tank in a vitalizing solution heated

to 98.8°. It has its own blood supply for industrial or other purposes. Hundreds of electrodes attached to it work a multitude of machines.

newly born human beings from all human contact by feeding them from simple machines for five years and nearly all of them will grow up in mere animals. Without human touch and teaching, you will rear near-idiots.

Bring up insects in isolation and nothing similar will happen. Why? The insect has always been brought up in quasi-isolation. It needs no teaching because it is a self-contained entity with a miraculous mechanism: instinct by inheritance. It does not learn as a rule. Rather, it will do the same acts over and over, whether necessary or not, blindly and without reasoning.

● The electronic brain, like the human, must be taught—it cannot function by itself. The problem is to solve must be carefully stated by specialists, usually technicians and mathematicians. This is nearly always done by means of punched cards. Unless the problem is carefully and precisely stated, the electronic computer cannot function. Indeed, it can make all sorts of mistakes, if not properly guided. Only highly intelligent technicians can delineate the problems correctly. It is, therefore, doubtful that an electronic brain will acquire intellect in the foreseeable future.

Could an electronic brain or

the most elaborate computer ever turn out new and important inventions? Could it be an inventor like Edison? Could it make great discoveries like a Faraday, a Nikola Tesla? Could it think up Newton's law of gravitation, Einstein's theory of relativity?

Could it write all of Shakespeare's dramas—or Jules Verne's or H. G. Wells' technical forecasts of the future? Or could it compose Verdi's or Wagner's operas?

● No, positively not! No pure machine will ever acquire intellect and do these things, at least not for the next thousand years. Eventually yes, when we succeed in growing a reasonable facsimile of the human brain in the laboratory—an actual brain in a tank, equipped with electronic tentacles and means of communication for intercourse with the outside world.

How do we get such an Electronicized Brain? We breed it. We keep it alive for centuries in a special vitalizing broth, just as famed Dr. Alexis Carrel kept a chicken heart alive and growing in a glass tank for decades.

● Such brains would not be exact duplicates of present human brains—they would be different in certain respects, inasmuch as their main purpose

would be intellectual specialization, for instance, in literature, invention, the arts, physics, etc.

Since such a brain would be completely isolated, it would have to operate a vast array of electronic instruments, computers, magnetic tape recorders, typewriters and dozens of other machines. Hence a specialized human brain will be required for future "industrial" "thinking" machines.

How can such a human brain be "wired" and connected to the vast array of instruments which it is supposed to operate?

● There is no difficulty about that—even today. Indeed, in many instances in the past decade, electroencephalographs have been connected directly to the human brain by means of suitable electrodes. This is done by piercing the skull with a number of small holes. Platinum wires are then inserted into the skull openings which contact the brain in various locations. It is a curious fact that brain tissue is absolutely insensitive. It can even be cut by a surgeon without anesthetic—the patient feels no pain whatsoever.

Thus there seems to be no valid reason why future laboratory brains could not be permanently wired, provided proper safeguards have been taken against infection, too great a pressure against the brain by the electrodes, etc.

How do we obtain such brains? In the future—maybe several thousands of years hence—science may have advanced sufficiently so that such brains will actually be "grown" independently of a human body. Just as Dr. Carrell could grow live tissue from small pieces of a former live chicken heart suspended in sterile bouillon, so science may be able to grow human brains.

But long before that, scientists and other altruistic volunteers will have donated their brains to science before their death. This will be true particularly of those unselfish men who have incurable diseases.

● It is not possible to utilize the brain after death has set in, particularly if the body has been ravaged by a long illness, such as cancer. Hence steps must be taken to obtain the brain while it is still normal and healthy.

This means special legislation and new medical laws, to allow a board of surgical specialists to secure a living brain that has been willed by its owner to science prior to his demise.

Before this time arrives, brains of criminals condemned to death will first be used for such experimental purposes. This will make new medical laws necessary, once it has been proved that isolated living brains are a possibility.

End inserted above.

I found a stash of ahrvid-related clips from my Royal Library digging. So bear with me. First the last breath of a project I forgot. *SF News* May 28, 1986 (paper not stated but the narrow column style of the time points to evening rag Expressen)



Law that bans citizens to engage in space activity without a permit. "It a hair-raising that the government shall have a monopoly on something that important," Ahrvid says. When we visit the Space Movement's simple Stockholm office there's a film show about the Space Law. A hacker is arrested by the Security Police since he operates satellites from his computer. They hope to show the film in schools and youth centres but haven't reached that far yet. The economy is poor.../All about this film a couple off issues ago! Here I skip comments on the crazy "United Future" group. Would take too much time to put all things straight.../ He proudly shows how they have obtained a telescope, a computer, a photo lab, and a library of magazines, open for those curious about space. "We are for peaceful use of space. None of the superpowers will manage it alone, he says. But what kind of riches can you find? "Energy, minerals and food /space grown/. Sun-based solar power delivers three times as much energy wice as long as on Earth. The Moon and asteroids are full of interesting stuff to mine, powered by solar energy. This is what Ahrvid and his friends see as the first stage. The next stage is beginning to change planets, making the Earth-like, something called terraforming. "We could start on Mars. Spray charcoal on the poles to catch heat and melt them. Place organisms that produce oxygen. The pressure will slowly rise. Making it possible for people to be there. All this is doable, but in a perspective of thousands of years," Ahrvid says. But should you manipulate nature like that? "Since there is no other life in the solar system we can experiment as much as we want. Terraforming is a natural proecss, we just speed it up. /In due time/ Ahrvid doesn't for a moment doubt this can be done. In due time. He sees the space movement and their sister groups around the world, as spearheads in a struggle for a future that must come. "Earth will else become a planet of stone and dirt, like Mars is today, What else would I do. This feels important for me. I'm driven by my interest in space and humanity's future /From Malmö to Östersund/ The Swedish Space movement is a non-profit organsation founded in 1984 intending to give new life to the Swedish space debate. There are subgroups from Malmö to Östersund, the biggest is in Stockholm with 300 members, out of a total of 500. Their aim is to promote peaceful space activity and spread knowledge about space. They write articles, hold lectures, make exhibitions and publish Space News (earlier title Space Life). They cooperate with similar organisations in about 10 countries, including Planetary Society in the US which has 100 000 members and is an important lobby group promoting more US space activity.



Above Isaac Asimov appearing in the Superman comics, though he is called Asa Ezaak!

I only vaguely remember giving those lectures. I don't think more than perhaps 10 people showed up, but one must have been the reporter with whom we later met up at the then brand new little Space Movement HQ (57 Skåne Street). I note terraforming takes thousands of years and more advanced space flight may take 50 years (we're near it now with SpaceX!). I still believe space is important for our future, but the UN has called off the "population explosion", it's highly unlikely we'll be depleted of resources, but we need space for new knowledge, new horizons, a backup if a huge comet hits us...and why not the huge adventure! Our Space Movement was perhaps a bit too early. It should be around now, when so much more space things happen!

Author Börje Crona often came to our cons. Here he reports in Dagens Nyheter 5 dec 1983 (and it was of course an exaggeration that all fen had beanies – it was probably only me):



Ahrvid Engholm i propeller-försedd fans-mössa.

### Monstruös kongress

För vänner av marsmonster och resor till stjärnorna inföll julen i Åre redan den gångna helgen. De arrangerade Skandinavisk förening för science fiction (SFSF) sin årliga kongress i Tekniska högskolans kårhus i Stockholm. Svecon kallas arrangemanget, och där samlades förläggare och författare med fans från hela landet.

Fansen var lättast att känna igen – de bar den propellerförsedda mössan som är obligatorisk i detta sammanhang.

Filmer som "Alien" och "Bladerunner" visades för en andaktig publik, och i pauserna redogjorde författarna för hur de skriver, varför de skriver och vem som skriver åt dem.

(Bertil Mårtensson har exempelvis en valdressad dator.)

Sit-präglat musik av Paul Lindbergs livintett och världspremiären på ett skakande teaterstycke av David Nettle och Erik Andersson var andra bejublade programpunkter.

För att i någon mån återställa ordningen i oljmanackan kommer Sveriges Radio att sända en rapport från evenemanget i P1 kl 21 den nästkommande lördagen. CRONA

(Caption: Ahrvid Engholm with the propeller beanie for fans. /Interestingly you only see a small rim of the beanie./)

For friends of Mars monsters and trips to the stars Xmas happened past weekend. Scandinavian SF Association had its yearly convention in the Technical University student house. Svecon it is called, and brings together publishers and authors with fans from the whole country. Fans were easy to recognize – they wore that propeller beanie that is compulsory in these circumstances. Films like "Alien" and Bladerunner "were shown. And in pauses authors described how they write, why they write and who writes for them (Bertil Mårtensson eg has a well-behaving computer.) there was sf music by Paul Lindbergs quintet and world premiere of a shaking theatre play by David Nettle and Erik Andersson was another appreciated program item. To somewhat make the calendar right again, Swedish Radio will have a report from the event in P1 9pm the real Xmas Eve /Signed CRONA/

There's more Engholm in that AE-stash. In Dagens Nyheter May 30, 2000 I explained where to word "fan" comes from (that it just from "fanatic" sounds to rough!) - *New ideas for fan:*

*Due to Catharina Grunbaum's language column last Saturday, a reader contacted us:*

*I have read about another theory than that "fan" comes from "fanatic" (Lat "fanum", temple). And that is that "fan" comes from the English "the fancy". My New Bantam English dictionary isn't*

*sure "fan" is from "fanatic", and only says "perhaps fanatic. 19th Century British sports enthusiasts were called "the fancy" (whatever sport it was, horse racing, golf, cricket). Such a "fancy" (to imagine, to like) followed their sports heroes as an approving tail. "Fancy is in it's turn short for "fantasy", from Greek "phantasia" (to show).*

There you have it. Do you think "fan" comes from "fanatic" or "the fancy"?

And here's comment to an editorial where I try to wake up local writers:

I took over the then new sf-mag Nova SF for couple of years, before John-Henri Humbug crashed it spectacularly by using it in his fan fund fraud, nicking several \$K (but you'll only hear him claim making up phone lists of names were permissible: fingers + cookie jar = lie thru your false teeth!). I had written a similar piece for *Jules Verne Magasinet* earlier. Below Dagens Nyheter comments my *Advice for an sf writer*, 1985:

*"To you who write" editor Ahrvid Engholm says in an editorial in the latest issue of sf-magazine Nova SF. Nova seems to get stories from its reader and in this issue Engholm has decided to give some advice to his enthusiastic but perhaps not as well trained contributions. It's a fine little article written by a weary but still optimistic /I already had a couple of years slushpile digging from Teknikmagasinet/ Engholm has to start from scratch: You must use a typewriter with clean types. The advices are wise and constructive: most must be retyped, try to spell right, the beginning is important. Ahrvid Engholm also likes the logical end. But most claimed "surprise ends" are far from surprising. And he emplores the readers to avoid ends "where the sun turns into a nova" and in a giant explosion destroys persons and plot. "A good sf writer only lets the sun explode when it's necessary", Engholm maintains*

I like the phrase that a good skiffy writer only let the sun explode when it's necessary...

### Nya uppslag för fan

Med anledning av Catharina Grunbaums språkspalt i lördags har en läsare hört av sig:

Jag har läst om en annan teori än den att "fan" kommer från "fanatic" (från latinets "fanum", tempel). Och den är att "fan" kommer från engelskans "the fancy". Mitt New Bantam English Dictionary är inte alls säkert på att "fan" är från "fanatic", utan säger bara "perhaps fanatic".

"The fancy" var benämningen på brittiska sportentusiaster på 1800-talet. (Vilken sport det nu kan ha varit, hästsport, golf, cricket.)

Ett sådant "fancy" (föreställa sig, gilla) följde med sina sporthjältar som en gillande svans. "Fancy" är i sin tur en förkortning av "fantasy", från grekiskans "phantasia", visa.

Ahrvid Engholm

### Råd till en sf-författare

"TILL DIG SOM SKRIVER" skriver redaktör Ahrvid Engholm en ledare i senaste numret av sciencefictiontidningen Nova.

Tydligen får Nova in en mängd noveller från sina läsare, och i detta nummer har Engholm beslutat förmedla några råd till sina entusiastiska men kanske inte alltid så tränade bidragsgivare.

Det är en fin liten artikel, skriven av littrat men fortfarande optimistisk redaktör. Engholm får börja från scratch: "Du måste skriva maskin med rengjorda typer..."

Råden är kloka och konstruktiva; det mesta måste skrivas om – försök stava rätt – början är viktigt.

Ahrvid Engholm talar sig också varm för det logiska slutet; de flesta förment överraskande slut är allt annat än överraskande.

Och han vädjar till läsarna att undvika slut "där solen blir en nova", och i en jätte-explosion gör slut på både personer och intrig. "En bra sf-författare låter bara solen explodera när det behövs", framhåller Engholm.

MÅRTEEN BLUMKVIST

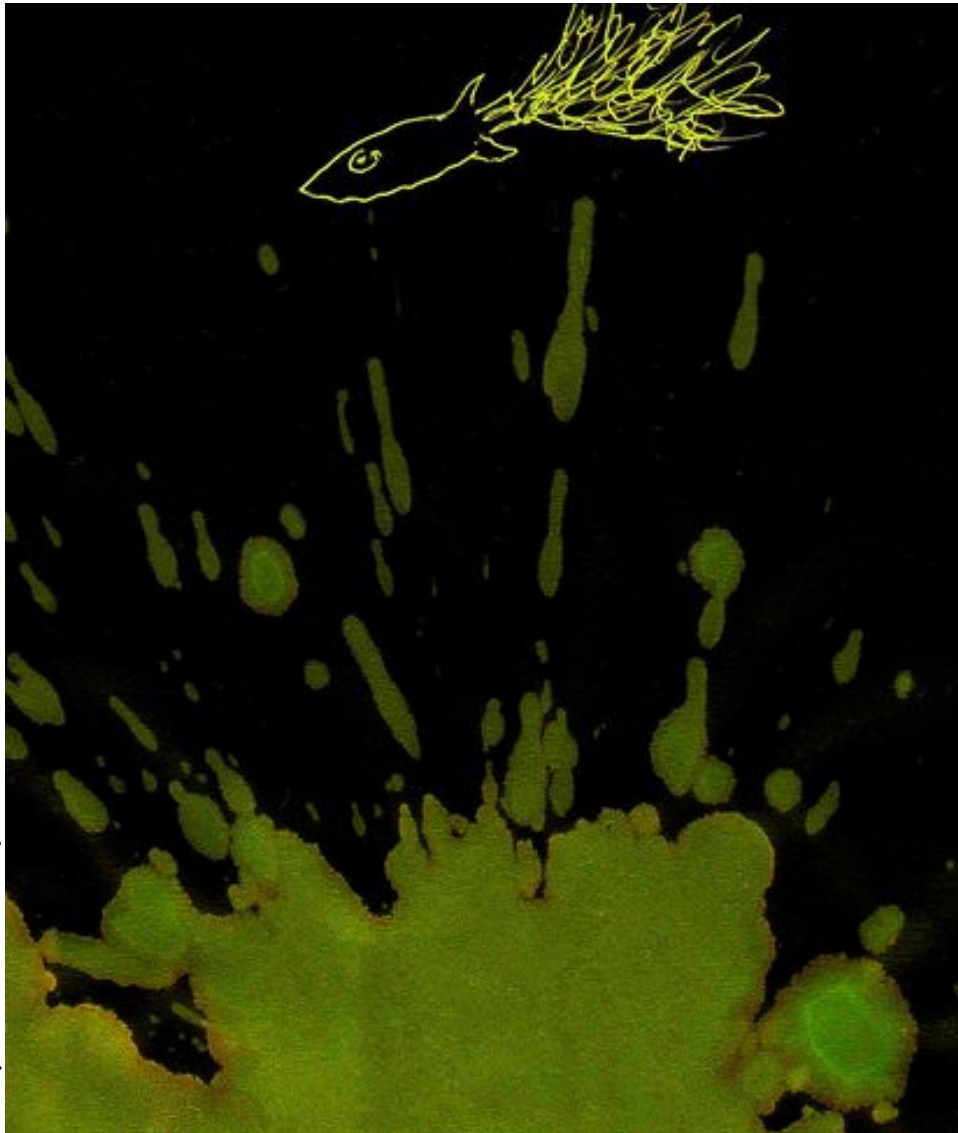


## Mailing Comments

Here comments to latest EAPA (there was no new NAPA, a mid July mlg is on. Intermission started in APAs, that's why MCs...though now also goes to some others fortunate). BTW, why not do a fanzine yourself! Fandom as we know it is sinking, and as it is flooded with silly superhero costumes, brainless games and pointless sword & sorcery. You see few of the traditional sf fanzines! I suggest: do a zine and you'll become rich, healthy and trufannish!

**Garth Spencer:** Congrats for your fan fund adventures! Waiting for your revelations about SF Canada... *Intermission's* fanzine blockade means no copy of *Intermission* goes to the Kermlin. It'll hit them hard! (The concept of a fanzine blockade was BTW invented in 1978 by one Marvyn de Vil in Tullinge, AFAIK he's the first to announce one and use that exact term. The first target was one Mr Belly, due some of the evil doings he was up to already then. Thus spoke the fandom historian.)

**Henry Grynsten:** No, when you urge for sharply increased "equality" you *cannot* refer to science. First, you aren't even into *science* ("naturvetenskap" in Swedish) as the word is used in English. You merely refer to *social sciences* ("sällskapsvetenskap" etc in Swedish). Secondly, these soft social sciences you think are science has since the 1970s and on been undermined by postmodernism and similar anything-goes-ideology, logically also is the force behind - what has been named - the growing replication crisis:



A rocket dropping an Atomic Blob...or what? Ask artist Lars LON Olsson.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Replication\\_crisis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Replication_crisis) Replication means the ability of independent researchers to get the data, replicate the experiments or investigations, run the calculations...and get the same result. If you can do that, we have science and confirmed hypothesis. What can't be replicated *isn't science*. And more and more of claimed science *has shown to be irreproducible* (especially soft research as social sciences). Your claimed backing of "science" (eg social sciences) is very weak! Thirdly, what we talk about is ethics. That is asking "what is good and what is bad"? Calculations, test tubes, meter readings can't answer what "good" is! You need some sort of deep philosophical reasoning to *try* to find answers to ethical questions. Science won't cut it. It's a question of what values seems valid. Is it good or bad to respect the individual and limit collectivism? Is it good or bad to let politicians run more of the show from the top? If freedom of action and thought promote creativity is it good or bad? Science can't answer. Social sciences even less so. When you refer to - in the opinion of many' the infamous - *The Spirit Level* (2009, Wilkinson/Pickett), what you put such much faith in has huge problems. Here're some:

- Claimed correlations in the book are often very sensitive to chosen data, and disappears if some are removed. Graphs often look like dalmation dogs.
- Worth remembering is also that correlation isn't causation. The authors ignores plausible third factors which would be more likely causation. Like: drop in Russian lifespan in 1990s is more likely

from increased vodka flow, much medical data from the US must be heavily influenced by the lack of a universal health system, panning out life expectancy - or other medical factors - must have more to do with biological limitations than economics, teenage pregnancies more likely to come from lack of contraceptives, sex education and morale/religious attitudes, public trust in this or that comes from the media landscape and the temperament and contents of that, violence depends on drugs and spread of weapons. (Note: we have such a problem now with criminal gangs target shooting on each other, having drugs and weapons smuggled in. But it can't come mainly from poverty: if so poorer countries would have bigger problems, and they don't, at least in our vicinity. The problem comes from the police being utterly inefficient, social services too, and the criminal system inept. The inefficiency of Swedish police is no news BTW...)

- Much of their reasoning is mushy. A good hypothesis says not only *that* X happens but also *why* it happens. They can't explain why creativity should grow if you command people more through politics, limit people's choice and actions and take things from folks to give to others. Why should economy grow with centralised economy, which has shown failures world wide? And by taking and handing out money in no relation to the individual's effort?

Both authors are described as "activists" by Wikipedia (saying a lot since Wiki itself is rather into activism!) and towards the end of their book they begin to speculate about fixing everything by making companies and businesses collectives, like Soviet Kolkhozes. Such have almost never worked! Their blindness is exposed when they praise the 1980's "wagetaker funds" in Sweden. It was a deeply unpopular system promoted by our own TUC's left wing, soon scrapped and forgotten. Their intellectual shortcomings is also obvious when they speculate about the "predominantly egalitarian societies of Stone Age human hunters and gatherers" (p204). The murder rate in these "egalitarian" societies has shown to be as high as 10-25%! (Eg "Proving Communal Warfare among Hunter Gatherers: The Quasi-Rousseau Error" by Azar Gat, Evolutionary Anthropology, 2015). A very bloody dream society...

No, claiming "groping" is an "assault" makes the meaning fussy. Some may attempt to use the word that way, but it remains a military attack or a violent physical attack. I'm against trying to twist words for ideological reasons. That's Orwellian newspeak. Governments and their laws are politicians trying to score points. No cigar! But of course Asimov, coming from where he came, thought it was "legitimate and permissible flirtation." Groping is shitty behaviour, but don't compare it to a violent assault. If groping would be that, the Russian attack on Ukraine becomes... *just groping!*

Als *are* moving towards brain complexity, but it will take a long time! I'd guess 10 years from now, at least. Yes, we are probably coctivores. That has obvious advantages. Interesting essay, as always.

**Heath Row:** I've checked your film tips the best I can. Thanks!

**William McCabe:** The Hugos began as a US award, so we can really complain. Let Hugos cover all original works in English too. Fine by me. I know the six who nominated Bertil Falk in ESFS quite well and am sure they did. It can easily be checked by releasing initials (that'd be enough for verification) of nominators, so it is a fishy to refuse. Nominations may get lost etc but circumstances don't imply anything like that. What happened is that two in the board (I have indication in an E-mail to prove it) decided the outcome from the start, wanting to lick ass, and it'd be a nuisance to have it publicly shown another nominee was more popular (not to forget more deserving!). Besides, *ESFS* arranges the awards, it's *their* responsibility, not mine, to show their hands are clean. Why ask for nominations to begin with you've already decided they don't count? It *stinks*.

**All you beloved PDFzine consumers:** I may run a LoC if the contents carries *extra* weight. However, make any comments you want on your website, blog, your own zine or whatever (and plz show it to me!). Fanzines need to get shout outs! We need more of them. Fanzines were the backbone of fandom and should be promoted. "Social media" is so shallow...

Time to stop! Se ya' in next issue. Please write a review or something of *Intermission*. We need more buzz around fanzines...

**Слава Україні!**